



Buzzwords ...



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..... the newsletter for National Beekeepers' Association members

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Members of the Waikato and Northland branches have recently voiced considerable concern on the subject of export certification. The first point all beekeepers should be aware of is the fact that MAF does not require export certification of any bee products. Certification, when it is called for, is in all cases a requirement of the importing country. It is also not essential for beekeepers to use MAF for certification. There are other bodies that do this type of work. However, beekeepers might be surprised at how much such organisations charge.

If beekeepers feel certification charges to particular countries are too expensive or too difficult to comply with, I would suggest a direct approach to the importers involved. An example is the 8 km AFB-free requirement on the Canadian certificate. Getting the Canadians to drop this

requirement would be a much cheaper option than the proposed conformity certification scheme.

Of greater concern to me in this certification debate is the strong sense of "MAF bashing" in a certain portion of our industry. I believe such comments are mis-directed and do not represent the views of the larger part of New Zealand beekeepers.

HONEY PRICES

If my memory serves me correctly, in my first newsletter article as your president I said that my overseas contacts tell me that the world price of honey will increase during November 1991. To date I have had no further information to refute this statement.

EXPORT CERTIFICATION CHARGES ANNOUNCED

Certification charges for bee products and live bees have been set at \$27 + GST per certificate. These increases are in line with government policy to recover all costs associated with export certification. Charges for conformity certification programmes set up for specific products and markets (such as sterilised honey to Australia and the proposed live bee certification to Canada) continue to be charged out on an individual basis.

MAF Quality Management

EXPORT CERTIFICATION - OZ STYLE

Just in case you thought the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence, here's an explanation of Australian Federal government live bee certification charges from a recent NSW Department of Agriculture newsletter:

"Any beekeeper exporting bees must have at least 10% of their colonies inspected for export certification by an Apilary Officer. This is done on a cost recovery basis (i.e., the beekeeper pays for the inspection service). This certification remains current for three months. The cost of the inspection is AUS\$134 (NZ\$189) per hour, plus mileage, with the export certificate costing AUS\$65 (NZ\$92) per consignment. These charges are set by the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS)."

In case you're wondering, that's about 3.5 times higher than the NZ MAF charge-out rate.

Bee Briefs, August 1991

BLACK BEES WANTED

David Yanke, Daykel Queens, PERIA, just can't sit still. Readers of this newsletter will know that David is the driving force behind the successful New Zealand Bee Genetic Improvement Group. David manages this programme in between raising his own queens for the domestic and overseas market. And as if that's not enough, now David would also like to take a second look at New Zealand's "other" race of bees, the European bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*). Here's David's request:

"Because this is *Buzzwords*, I'll get straight to the point. What I would like to do is take a close look at our dark feral bee stocks. The theory is that since their introduction last century this bee has remained racially pure against all odds. It has done so because it is so well suited to New Zealand conditions, and perhaps because of some mating advantage which is not fully understood.

In 1989, Bill Bielby, a former British government bee advisor, sent a sample of dark feral bees back to the UK for morphometric identification. The sample was taken from near the site of the Miss Bumby introduction in 1839. The identification showed that these bees were indistinguishable from the "Viking" bee (preserved bees found at a Viking archaeological site in York dating back to 1000 AD). This

bee, most commonly known as the dark European honey bee, is the hardiest of all races. It is native to all of Europe north of the Alps and is best suited to regions with a cool climate and late flows. Its seasonal behaviour can best be described as cautious - it starts brood rearing late, builds up slowly, and shuts down early in the autumn. It tends to be nervous and runny on the comb and more stingy than either the Italians or the Carniolans. Even so, the British Isles Bee Breeders Association is very one-eyed about this bee. One of the main aims of the association is the preservation and improvement of the dark European bee. Members say that those beekeepers who have experienced the bee know that their policy makes "economic and ecological good sense".

We all have our own views about this bee, but most beekeepers here have actually only experienced its inter-racial hybrid, about which little positive can be said. I'm sure that there is enough variation within the race so that something of commercial value can be developed. Who knows, they may even produce a low cost, low maintenance alternative to our present yellow commercial bee stocks. Commercial value aside, as apiculturalists we should ensure its preservation, if only for posterity. In Tasmania, they have actually set up a bee sanctuary to protect and preserve this race.

I'd like to look further into this bee's possibilities, but to do so I need beekeepers' help. What I'm looking for are pure black queens (no stripes allowed) heading colonies showing no sign of hybridising with yellow stock. So if in your beekeeping travels you come across any "black beauties" I would be very grateful if you would send me about 25 of her workers (dead) in a mail-proof container. The morphological characteristics of the workers will be used to determine whether the queen is racially pure or if there is a degree of hybridisation.

If the queen is true to race I will send you a replacement queen (Italian type) and a mailing cage you can use to send me back the black queen. The queen you send will help form the basis of the breeding population, and once the population is big enough it will be closed off, with matings controlled using instrumental inseminations. And by the way, this black stock will be kept **well separate** from my other stocks. In case you're worried, it won't find its way into either my commercial stock or the Bee Genetic Improvement Group stock. I'm just doing this because these bees are part of our beekeeping past. And who knows, they may even be part of our beekeeping future!"

RECYCLED PACKAGING FORCED

In Germany the government has recently enacted a law which requires all packaging materials to be "environmentally compatible" and recyclable or reusable. That includes packaging used for products imported by Germany. The new law has been seen by some observers as another trade barrier to protect German manufacturers. This could obviously have serious implications for New Zealand's trade to Europe. A further worrying aspect is that the European Commission has taken Germany's lead and drafted a directive which calls for 60% of Europe's packaging to be recycled within five years.

The Main Report Agricultural Letter, 20 September 1991



ANUGA AIRBORNE

Airborne Honey, Leeston, achieved world-wide recognition in October by being included as one of 31 New Zealand exhibitors at the ANUGA world food and beverage fair held in Cologne, Germany. According to *Export News*, the list of exhibitors is "a who's who of the food sector" in New Zealand. The list includes such notables as the Apple and Pear Marketing Board, the Kiwifruit Marketing Board, Fortex, and Sealord Products.

The New Zealand exhibit was put together with the assistance of the New Zealand Trade Development Board. According to NZ Food and Beverage Exporters' Council executive director Sue Gifford, the emphasis is on high quality value-added products. "ANUGA is an important stepping stone to the wider marketplace. ANUGA organisers forecast an attendance of 250,000 and there are 6000 companies representing 90 nations."

Export News also profiled Airborne Honey as part of its coverage of the ANUGA fair. The profile stresses Airborne's wide range of unique New Zealand monofloral honeys as well as its organic honey certified under IFQAM affiliation.

Export News, 26 September 1991

ORGANICS COMMENT SOUGHT

We mentioned in the August issue of *Buzzwords* that the NBA executive had commissioned a report on organic honey certification. Many of you purchased a copy of that report and have provided valuable comments back to executive. Your executive believes that the organic market is an important new opportunity for New Zealand beekeepers and is considering adopting a NBA organic honey standard which could be used to certify product for the domestic and overseas market. It is therefore keenly interested in further comment before its December meeting. If you have a strong feeling either one way or another on the organic honey issue and whether the NBA should adopt an organic honey standard, send your comments to NBA Head Office, PO Box 4048, WELLINGTON before December 10.

COAST WATCH, BEEKEEPER-STYLE

A series of advertisements has been running recently on television asking viewers to be on the lookout for anything "suspicious" going on around New Zealand's coast. The idea is that the public should help the Border Protection Service and Customs in their effort to protect the country from smuggling and exotic diseases and pests.

Now MAF's Border Protection Service in Auckland is asking beekeepers to do something similar, only in this case it's with the mail. Overseas mail is currently being checked for restricted food items by the Customs Department on contract to MAF. Customs has to check the mail anyway for illegal items, so the BPS thought why not have them look for food stuffs as well. MAF then acts as an auditor for this Customs screening.

The problem is that honey seems to be getting through the system. Several alert beekeepers around the country have turned in honey that was either sent to them unwittingly or received by friends as gifts. Believe it or not, in one case the customs declaration (from the U.S.) actually stated "honey"! That's not good enough, although it's probably understandable given the fact that Customs deals with 7.2 million parcels per year, and of these 52,000 are seizable.

The Border Protection Service is aware of this problem and has increased their auditing of the Customs Department. The best way for them to tell if their screening has improved, however, is for beekeepers to keep an eye out for any honey that might get through the system. So if you happen across any honey which has come in from overseas through the mail, collect the sample, together with the package wrapping and customs declaration and mail it to:

Nick Emery
Unit Manager
Border Protection Service
MAF Quality Management
PO Box 1254
AUCKLAND

BRANCH NOTES

From Hawkes Bay comes word that a NBA executive sub-committee has confirmed the date and venue for next year's annual conference. Sponsors and advertisers are already in place, so if you want time or space get in touch with Ron Morison at (06) 844 9493 sooner, rather than later! The next meeting of the branch is scheduled for November 12 at 7:30pm at the Polytech. Guest speaker will be Alan Bougen of Cornvita who will speak on harvesting by-products to maximise returns from beekeeping.

Marlborough will be holding its springfield day on November 17 at Blairich, Awatere Valley, beginning at 12 noon. The venue will be signposted from Awatere Valley. Speakers include Reg Clarke (latest research), Stephen Ogden (disease inspections, conformity certification, and "anything else that is changing"), Rod McKenzie (comb honey production), and James Jenkins (spring management). Make sure to bring food for a barbecue. The Marlborough branch newsletter also includes this gem - "For those who are sufferers of footrot - try smearing a little manuka honey on the infection. A marvellous remedy. Ask Rod and James." Just one question, though. Is that footrot in people or sheep? (Imagine calling a ram "Rod"!)

CONTACTS IN AGRICULTURE

Branches will have received a letter from MAF Consultancy Business Group seeking free listings for a 1992 update of their *Contacts in Agriculture* directory. However, your executive has asked that we mention this publication again because many members may not realise that MAF is doing a major expansion of the directory this year and wants to devote a large part of its content to listing agricultural services and businesses. They have asked specifically for listings of beekeeping businesses (and no doubt pollination outfits) as well as firms which service the beekeeping



HONEY INDUSTRY TRUST FUND

Applications for funding close on 15 August and 15 February. Forms available from the NBA, PO Box 4048, Wellington.

industry. The really good part about this is that the listing is free!

If you're interested send details of your business (including address, phone and fax, contact name, and NBA branch affiliation) to:

Contacts in Agriculture
MAF Consultancy Business Group
MAF Tech
PO Box 841
PALMERSTON NORTH

All businesses listed will be given a copy of their typeset entry for proof-reading prior to printing.

TELFORD STUDENT AVAILABLE

A Telford beekeeping course student has written to the NBA Bay of Plenty branch seeking work for the summer holidays. She is:

Angela Green
63 Vandeleur Ave
Birkdale
AUCKLAND 10

Angela is keen to get some beekeeping work experience under her belt before she finishes her one year course.

PROTECTING OUR CLEAN, GREEN, GROWING MACHINE

MAF Quality Management staff will be visiting more than one thousand intermediate schools during the third term to deliver the newly completed MAF resource kit, *New Zealand Agriculture, Keeping it Safe from Foreign Pests and Diseases*. The kit, which has been written and developed in consultation with the Ministry of Education and a teacher working group, aims to teach young people how they can help protect New Zealand's agriculture from unwanted pests and diseases. And it turns out that beekeeping takes a very high profile in this unique educational programme, thanks to the input of MAF's apicultural officers.

Fewer New Zealand young people now have direct links with agriculture than in the past, yet our economy still remains firmly based on agricultural and horticultural products, providing about 60 percent of our export income. MAF needs the cooperation of all New Zealanders if it is to protect our agriculture from pests and diseases such as foot and mouth. This resource kit aims to foster that cooperation.

The kit is science-based, but many of the activities can be used in reading, language and drama studies, maths, and social studies. The kit follows an interactive learning

approach, with plenty of hands-on activities for children including designing an insect trap and growing the contents from the soles of their shoes!

The kit is divided into seven units. The first two put agricultural security into context by exploring students' relationships with agriculture as consumers and through family and friends. The third unit investigates what people in the community know about agricultural security. The students design and implement a questionnaire on quarantine regulations.

Many students probably think that pests and diseases are introduced deliberately by smugglers, so the next two units aim to destroy that myth. They look at how and why species like possums were introduced in the past and how pests and diseases travel.

Units six and seven are the 'biggies'. They concentrate on nasties we don't have and don't want, including pests and diseases of honey bees. Unit six contains two different beekeeping fact sheets. One, called "Honey Bees - The Unpaid Workers", explains the contribution made by honey bees as pollinators on our farms and orchards. A second, entitled "Bees Under Threat" looks at the pests and diseases which could devastate the beekeeping industry. Students are then asked to complete projects on "how bees work for us", which can be linked to school science work, and on "protecting the honey bee", which includes a research exercise on beekeeping in their local area (NBA branch secretaries be warned).

It's great to see our industry being used in such a positive way to help teach school children. After completing these units not only should they have an appreciation of agricultural security and quarantine, they'll also have a far better understanding of bees and beekeeping. You couldn't ask for better advertising.

MAF Update, September 1991

OOPS!

And then there's the story of the New South Wales beekeeper who decided to reduce the fire hazard around his apiary by having a burn-off!

CAA News, May-June 1991

BUZZWORDS IS ...

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Articles and feedback to *Buzzwords*, c/- MAF, Private Bag, Tauranga. Fax (07) 578 8429, phone (07) 578 2069. Deadline for copy is the 20th of each month.

The views expressed in *Buzzwords* are not necessarily those of the National Beekeepers' Association nor of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

